

# ARCPREP: WORK IN --- PROGRESS

Post-program interviews with  
University of Michigan Arcprep  
alumni as they navigate life,  
education, and profession

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Featured ArcPrep alumni:

**JOSHUA POWELL**  
**DENAJA KING**  
**ABID CHOWDHURY**  
**KAMRYON JOHNSON**  
**FERDINEM BARTOLON**  
**SUDIP DEB**  
**NYVEY PERRYMAN**  
**JOHAN MEDEL**

Introduction & interviews by:

**PAULINA REYES**  
2015-17 Michigan-Mellon Fellow

A pillar of architectural pedagogy, the review - or 'critique' - acts as the primary final assessment for a student's work on any given project. Reviews, which are planned by instructors strategically throughout a project's development, require students to mount an accumulated, yet curated version of their work and present to a jury of their peers, faculty, and invited guests. In perhaps the most important feature of review, each presentation is followed by questions, feedback and open dialogue as a means to provoke reflection and conjure new understandings of the work.

Although the review marks a deadline, every project is regarded as a work in progress, subject to interpretation and further development. In this sense, reviews are guided as much by speculation as they are evaluation.

The framework of architectural review is no less potent as a tool to evaluate the success of the University of Michigan's ArcPrep program as it approaches its own critical milestone: a decade in existence.

The impacts of the ArcPrep program over the past ten years are both far-reaching and difficult to capture in full. The program has seen hundreds of students graduate from its semester-long curriculum. Sister pipeline programs have since been established at Cornell, Princeton, and University of Southern California. A growing ecosystem of former students and fellows have forged long-term connections and professional support networks, far outlasting their relative tenure with the program.

Nevertheless, the ArcPrep program is a work in progress-its true potential remains to be seen. According to NCARB's latest annual 'By the Numbers' report, the average time to complete architectural licensure from college is 13.3 years. This is nothing to say of gap-years, graduate degrees, and the meandering career paths typical of younger generations. In this respect, the decade-old program is still relatively young.

Just as a final review provokes understanding through dialogue, the following piece reflects on the evolving legacy of the ArcPrep through open conversations with ArcPrep alumni. As a former Michigan-Mellon Design Fellow, some of these alumni are students I myself taught, others from before and after my tenure as an instructor. The resulting conversations describe students' personal experiences as they matriculate into higher education, become emerging professionals, and navigate their future, revealing profound if less tangible impacts of the program that can't be measured through tracking and metrics alone.

More than anything, these conversations prove the ArcPrep program to be much more than just an aspirational exercise, but a dedicated conduit for changing the future of architecture - its study, a profession, and cultural relevance.

# JOSHUA POWELL

ARCPREP CLASS OF 2015

*Architectural Designer at Quinn Evans  
ArcPrep Consortium Mentor, University of Michigan  
B.Arch, University of Michigan, Class of 2021  
M.Arch & M.U.R.P, University of Michigan, Class of 2023*



M.Arch Thesis, Hussle'n in the D: The Marathon Continues!



M.Arch Thesis Render, Vocational Grounds in Clarksdale Mississippi

**Do you remember any first impressions of the ArcPrep program? What the space felt like or what kind of exercises you did?**

Yeah, I can honestly say the first time that I participated in the program, my first impression of the space was that it was very new. It was something that wasn't quite as traditional as a high school. It really felt like I was taking a college class and so to me, first impression, it was a little intimidating. However, as I got into the program, I understood that this is exactly what I wanted to do.

It is an overwhelming reality in Detroit that a lot of students have to leave far outside of their neighborhoods into order to find a school and a lot of them have to leave the city in order to go to school. I'd love it if those buildings could become a community center or a hub for activities, a hub for education so students don't have to feel like there's nothing for them in the city, which drives a lot of people to leave. Ultimately, all of those things really culminated into my dream of adaptive reuse, reusing what we have to preserve the history of Detroit.

*"Personally what I seek is more equity and agency given to people on a social level - not just taking things as they are."*

**Do you have any kind of specific memories of the program or things that stand out in your mind?**

When I was in ArcPrep, our last project was creating a community center, just two blocks away from the ArcPrep space on Willis, which is where I work now [laughs]. I work now at Quinn Evans on Willis Street, but at that time there was an open lot and that lot still exists.

Working through that project and thinking of it as a real building in my mind really helped me to understand how to work as an architect. It really folded in all these different disciplines, whereas before I just thought architecture was just creating a building.

**How has being from Detroit shaped your ideas around what architecture is and what kind of impact an architect can have?**

Being from Detroit has had a pretty significant impact on my view on architecture, especially on my view of how architecture can be used. Having grown up here all 25 years of my life now, I've seen the differences, contrasting narratives between the homes in the city of Detroit, especially in the neighborhoods, like where I'm from, compared to the vibe of a lot of things are going on in the Downtown area.

Personally what I seek is more equity and agency given to people on social level - not just taking things as they are. If your home is in disrepair, you don't have access to resources unless you go outside the city. Another thing is that Detroit is a food desert. In many ways, a lot of people including my family have to cross Eight-Mile to go to grocery stores in order to bring that stuff back into the city because we just don't have that stuff.

I'm kind of going on a little bit of a tangent, but just thinking of the fact that a lot of suburbs and a lot of neighborhoods were supposed to be built around schools and all the students were supposed to go to that school.

**I get that. There's so much packed in there. Can you describe a little bit what your journey has been like since the ArcPrep?**

My journey has been a little more straightforward. Since ArcPrep, I had always intended to attend the University of Michigan. That's always been my dream school.

I got my undergraduate degree. I learned quite a bit about architecture there and I really enjoyed the experience so I went back for a grad school. I wanted to learn both the ins and outs of architecture, but also on how cities work, so I pursued urban planning. This has ultimately been my path for the past seven years, and now I'm working professionally as an architect.

**What are your plans for the future?**

I have a lot of plans for the future. But I'd say ultimately my plan for the future is to continue to pursue architecture in one way shape or another, but also to develop skills that can really benefit the community, especially here in Detroit. Also [learning the trades] like contracting, plumbing, electrical work, and maybe even roofing, like all these things that so many people need but they just don't have the access, right?

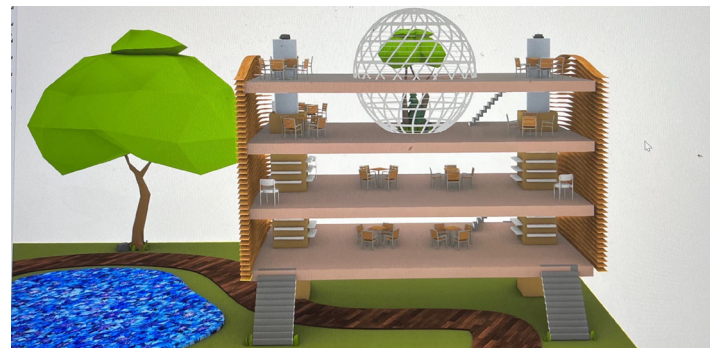
**If you could offer one piece of advice to a current ArcPrep student, what would it be?**

I would say really begin to do some research on the kind of buildings and kind of architecture that you're interested in right now. Just follow your dreams and if there's something that you want to do, look into it. Don't think of it as a pipe-dream. If you intend to go to college or even not, there are other ways that you can involve yourself in these disciplines that can connect back to your dreams, depending on what you want to do. I'd say just pursue it now and really look into it.

# DENAJA KING

ArcPrep Class of 2022

Undergraduate Student at University of Michigan  
B.Arch, University of Michigan, Class of 2027



Conceptual render of library project with connection to nature



Conceptual rendered section of library project

## What were your first impressions of the Arcprep?

I definitely thought it might be a little difficult because it was through the University of Michigan. So I was like, okay this might be a little different than how Miss Harding's class went. I was kind of anxious to see what the program was all about, but it turned out to be the best experience I've had in my life. Like really the best class.

## Wow! So was it what you expected it would be and if not, how was it different?

My expectations actually kind of grew from the program at first. It actually got me more interested in majoring in architecture – learning how to do Rhino and Photoshop and being able to visit firms and see what architects actually do. It made me more interested to become a licensed architect. And then that's what made me major in Architecture.

## Do you think what you learned in the program can also be applied to other fields outside of architecture?

I would say absolutely. We had a guest artist visit the program who does all of his designs using just lights. He actually went to school to be an architect but came out wanting to be an artist. I would definitely say ArcPrep showed us that there are different avenues when getting an architecture degree. It's not set in stone.

## What do you see is the importance of diversity in architecture - racial, gender, cultural? What's your personal experience with that?

Going to the University of Michigan and being in the architecture program, I think that our lecture was maybe three or four African-American students. So I feel like it's important to bring in the cultural aspect because that can change how you may look at a neighborhood if you come from different backgrounds.

*"I feel diversifying the field definitely helps to tailor designs to a community."*

## What were some of the things you enjoyed most about the program?

It would probably be more the hands-on learning aspect of architecture because I absolutely love to do everything hands-on. I've played with legos all of my life. We did our "Setting the Stage" project concept where we actually had to build what we did in Rhino and then we got to paint it outside. So I like the hands-on aspect of the architecture program.

## If you could change anything about the program, what would it be?

Honestly, the only thing is that it would be the full year because even though it was only a semester, I was like, I wish I could have done this all year! That's how exciting and fun it was.

## Do you think you would have pursued architecture had it not been for attending the program?

I might have thought of it, but still went with my first major which was mechanical engineering. I think ArcPrep really showed us what architecture looks like from a real-world perspective and not just a high-school class.

Somebody who's from maybe Ann Arbor, Michigan and has a project in Detroit isn't gonna look at the same someone who comes from Detroit and has lived in Detroit. So I feel diversifying the field definitely helps to tailor designs to a community.

## Who or what inspires you these days?

Honestly, I know it's cliché, but it definitely has to be my mom. She's definitely been my driving force for school. She stays on top of me of not burning out and doing the things that I'm passionate about. When I told her I want to go into architecture, she was like, 'These are top schools you can apply to, here's this program, here's this internship that you can possibly get if you reach out.' So she's definitely my superhero, my best friend, like it's definitely my mom.

## I love that. So this is my last question. If you could offer a piece of advice to current ArcPrep students, what would it be?

My advice would definitely be to stick with your dreams even if you think it may not turn out the way you want. Stick with it, because for me personally, I wanted to be an engineer. I went through school and I was do I really feel like I could be an engineer, especially being a minority and then being a woman in the industry that has barely any of us, so just to stick with your dreams, don't let adversity pull you away from what you want to do.

# ABID CHOWDHURY

ArcPrep Class of 2016

Designer at ROSSETTI

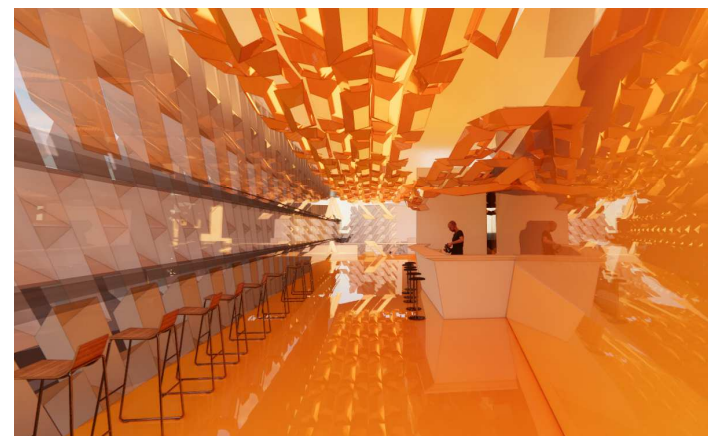
Masters Student at University of Michigan

B.Arch, University of Michigan, Class of 2021

M.Arch, University of Michigan, Class of 2025



Repose Perspective



Repose Cafe and Bar

## How were you first introduced to the ArcPrep program?

I was introduced to the ArcPrep program through the architecture curriculum at Cass Tech which transferred us into the ArcPrep program for that semester. We were all obligated to take that course within our architecture curriculum.

## Do you remember having any first impressions of the program? So you would have had drafting experience or classes with Miss Harding previous to that, right?

So with Miss Harding, we were more on the technical side. We were focused more within the interior realm of architecture. So when we went to do the course with the ArcPrep, it was an exposure to the world of architecture in a sense of design. It was the first time I was introduced to this level of architecture that I enjoyed. We were actually designing some of the projects, understanding how to design for certain programs and functions, and learning a lot of new words that fed into our architecture presentations - understanding how you even explain your projects. That was a new process that I learned.

## What kinds of projects are you working on right now and what is your role?

Recently, I've been working on projects in various phases. Since I am part-time, I somewhat just jump in and help out on a day-to-day basis whenever it's necessary and it's different every day. It could be detailing a facade system or detailing doors. Some days it's more technical, some days it's more diagrammatic or even we use a lot of real-time engines at the firm, so making sure there are updated textures. So we get to roll around the model with clients in real-time. That type of work.

## Now that you've worked at ROSSETTI for several years, you were able to oversee and mentor the next wave of ArcPrep high school interns. What was that like?

I really enjoyed those moments at ROSSETTI mentoring the interns and I remember when I was an intern. I had good mentors and I'm trying to pass that similar energy towards the next generation as well. And I think it's been fun seeing what the next generation is capable of. They're able to grasp this complex form of design that we do at ROSSETTI.

*"I had good mentors and I'm trying to pass that similar towards the next generation as well."*

## Do you have any specific standout memories of the program in your mind?

Yeah, I would say taking a visit to ROSSETTI in terms of seeing an architecture firm and how it operates for the first time. That was a surreal moment to me. I thought ROSSETTI was a really nice fit for me. And I ended up getting the internship that summer with ROSSETTI so that was really exciting.

## And now you've been working at ROSSETTI both full-time and part-time over the past few years. That's really incredible. Can you describe what that transition was like for you from a classroom environment learning about architecture into an actual office environment?

I don't vividly remember everything from that moment of time and during my internship at ROSSETTI in 2016, but I do remember us going into the internship and using our skills to really help the team develop some of the physical models. At ROSSETTI, we were given Revit models to translate into Rhino that were very complex forms, and I remember it was three of us and we were 16, 17 years old doing 3D-modeling. I would say those moments during the internship really helped me to hone in my skills and get faster at these programs over time.

## What about the projects that you're now working on in grad school?

It's been really fun doing projects, being back in school, and taking some time off right after my undergraduate degree. It really helped me to develop my skills and reset for the past two years. My design is something that's unconventional. At times, it may feel very sculptural, but it really cares for its users and needs. I'm starting to develop those moments right now as being back in grad school.

## Who are mentors in architecture?

I've said it in the past, but you and [former Fellow] Missy [Ablin] have been more of the guiding mentors for me. I think you guys have helped me a lot in that sense - those moments when looking at schools or even classes or looking for a job. Reaching out to you guys or even grabbing lunches and coffees.

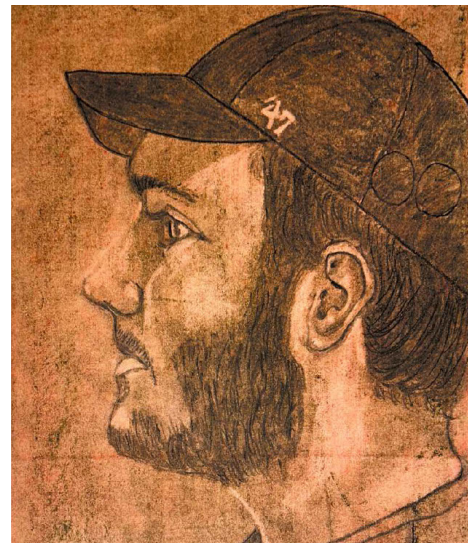
## If you could offer one piece of advice to current ArcPrep students, what would it be?

I would say have mentors. Make connections. And also later on in life learn to mentor as well.

# KAMRYON JOHNSON

ArcPrep Class of 2021

Undergraduate Student at University Detroit Mercy  
B.Arch, University of Michigan, Class of 2027



Charcoal portrait, 18" x 24"



UDM B.Arch concept model of exterior space

## What year and semester did you attend the ArcPrep program?

I attended ArcPrep from 2021 to 2022. I took Miss Harding's class first, and then we switched over to the spring semester with Torri [Smith] and Yojairo [Lomeli].

## What brought you to attend?

ArcPrep was implemented through Cass during my Junior year. So you take a semester studying the older principles of architecture, and then you take ArcPrep like the newer principles. It was an experience for sure.

## Did you have any first impressions of the program?

No, I just remember walking into the space and thinking 'this is cool'. It was something besides a traditional classroom setting and I thought that was nice.

## What do you see as important about diversifying the field? More people of color, more black women in the profession, what does that mean to you?

I think that is extremely important because for the life of me, even though I didn't know architecture was, I just automatically assumed it was a white, American led-field, and of course, it is. But now as you get older, I'm finding more Hispanic people joining, more Black people, more Native people and I love that because I feel like design has to include any and everybody from all aspects. How can you really design something for someone that you never experienced? You need those people at your table who at least have some type of background and I feel like that is very important to have.

*"How can you really design something for someone that you never experienced?"*

## Do you have any specific standout memories of the program?

When we first got there, I vividly remembered Yojairo asking us to continuously draw lines, just try to draw straight lines. But my favorite thing I would say was making a green screen video with my friends and it got uploaded to the ArcPrep [Instagram]. I thought that was really cool and funny.

## What were some of the big things that you took away from it or learned about what architecture is and what it means to you?

I would say architecture is really never-ending. I really learned that coming to college and then I realized ArcPrep gave me a glimpse of it. At the time, I didn't really understand the questions that were being asked, but now I realize what an actual crit is, and how it helps you progress, not only architecture, but what you're working on in general. Just getting that feedback.

## What are your plans for the future?

I would want more experience and firms to intern. I want to venture out or explore more once I already have that architecture degree up under my belt, but I would want to see more than the office-side of architecture. I just want to branch deeper into the profession. I even thought of going into real estate. So there's a lot of things happening up here.

## What inspires you these days?

I'm a big music fan during studio. When it gets hard and I'm like, 'Man, I really don't know what I'm doing', I put in my Beats and I put in real inspirational music. Optimistic by Sounds of Blackness - that's the song there. It just keeps me going, like, no matter which experience right now. Just hold on to your dreams. You'll be okay.

Also my mom especially. She guides me because she always wants better for her kids. As a mother she wants her kids to excel, so she's always like, 'You're in school. I don't know anything about architecture, but if there's anything you need. Do you need some supplies? Do you need to just sit there on the phone with you?' Just the little things that help.

## This is my last question. If you could offer a piece of advice to a current ArcPrep student, what would it be?

Take full advantage of it and network! I'm learning as you get to college, it's not what you know, it's more who you know. You never know who you could be talking to, so always maintain professionalism as well and just put yourself out there. You never know who's looking out for you.

# FERDINEM BARTOLON

ArcPrep Class of 2015

*Design Strategist at AECOM*

*B.Arch, University of Detroit Mercy Class of 2020*

*M.Arch, University of Detroit Mercy, Class of 2021*



M.Arch Thesis



Masterplanning work with AECOM

## How were you first introduced to that program?

So it was quite random. I think it was around this time when we were getting close to winter break in high-school. One of counselors came up to us and asked us if we were interested in a program that they were offering. It was similar to what we call Votech where you would go off to another campus, and I was interested. I decided to sign up and that's how I heard about the program.

## Do you remember any first impressions of the program?

It was something fairly new for me. I was stuck with my AP classes but going [to the ArcPrep space] was way different, that studio-vibe where you get to sit close on big tables with other people and then meeting other people that you never knew from other high schools. It was totally different from [other high-school classes]. I had no expectations because I wasn't sure what I was getting into.

## Do you have any stand-out memories of the program?

For me, it was a critiques. That's something I'll never forget because back then, I was a shy person. So for me, I was super nervous. Having those critiques helped me improve myself a lot – to be less shy, being more talkative, and talk to other people. That's something, like, I never forget— my first ever critique of our presentation.

*"I want to teach others, especially in the Hispanic and Latino community, to expose them more to architecture"*

## At what point did you decide to pursue architecture as a major?

It was right after the Arcprep program because initially I had no idea what architecture was. For me, it was like I'm gonna go as civil engineer or something mechanical, but I've never heard about architecture till I did the Arcprep program. That's what inspired me to pursue architecture.

## Who do you see as your mentors and architecture?

My mentors are the principals here at AECOM and also my managers which have different backgrounds. For example, there's some that are interior designers and engineers. Having that mix of mentors has really helped me in my profession.

## What's a project that you've worked on – could be professional or academic – that you're most proud of?

So it would be my Graduate thesis which was about a

migrant's journey through Mexico. I held a lot of interviews with migrant people on what they've been through – all the struggles. They went through all of these routes in Mexico and for me as a designer figuring our way and how I can help them. So that's one of the projects that I'm really proud of.

## What kinds of projects are you working on now? And what is your role?

We call it Strategy Plus, which is a team at AECOM. There's mix of people with different backgrounds, people with business backgrounds, engineering backgrounds, architecture. It's just a mix of everything and I collaborate with everybody. We do a lot of capital planning, master planning for cities, a lot of design management workplace strategy.

## What are your plans for the future?

My plans right now are to get licensed, and I'm currently studying for the ARE exam. I'm also slowly starting to work on more architecture projects. Like I said, my role is a Design Strategist, but also right now I'm trying to collaborate more with the architecture team here in Detroit AECOM office. My goal is to get licensed and then maybe in the future in 10 years have my own business.

## Do you see yourself staying involved with future generations of ArcPrep students?

Yes, actually, that's something that I want – pretty much to teach others, especially in the Hispanic community, the Latino community, to expose them more to architecture because not a lot of people know about architecture and architecture school.

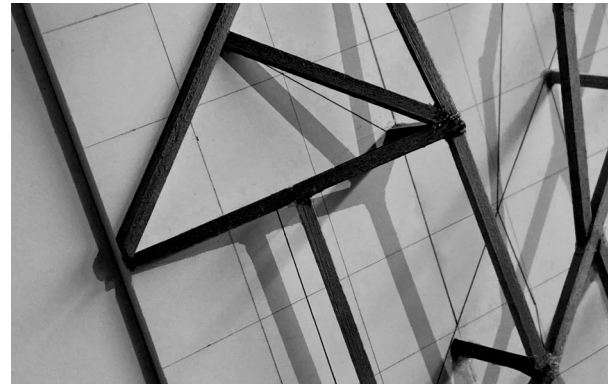
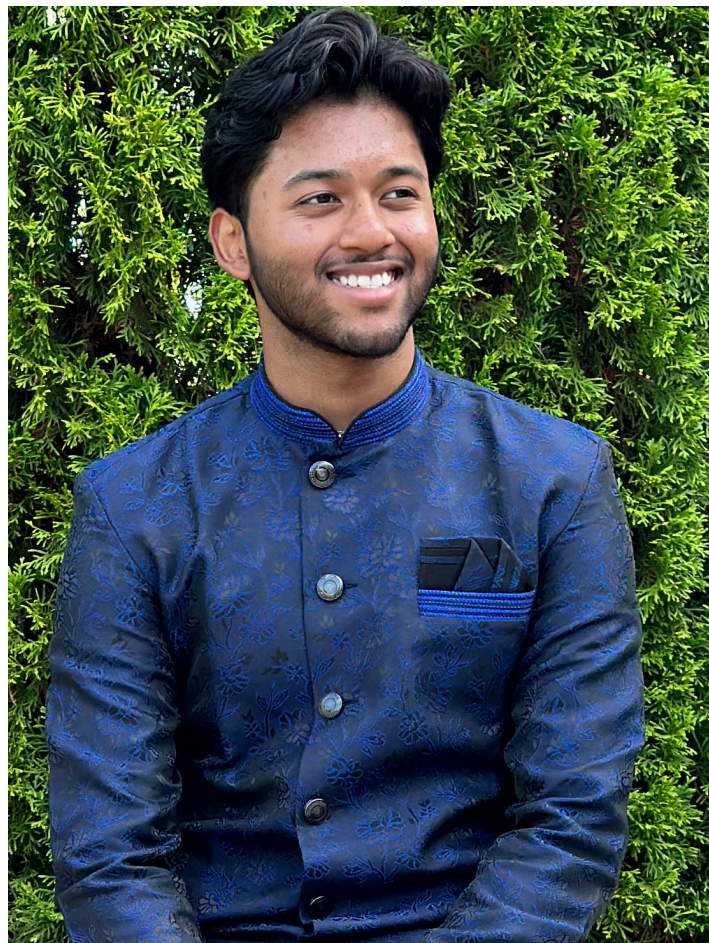
## If you could offer a piece of advice to current ArcPrep students, what would it be?

That's a good one. So if you do decide to do architecture school, it's gonna get hard. Architecture school is hard and stressful, but in the end, I feel like it's worth it if you're really motivated. Architecture is not for everyone. I've seen a lot of people in college that it wasn't for them, and they would drop out, but if they decide to keep pushing forward, I feel like it's rewarding in the end.

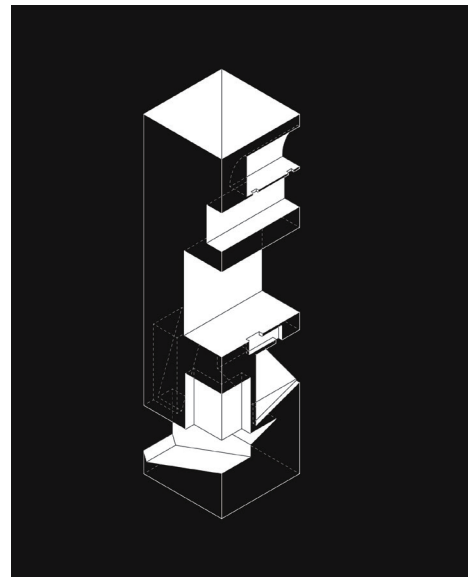
# SUDIP DEB

ArcPrep Class of 2022

High School Senior at Cass Technical High School



ArcPrep conceptual model



ArcPrep 'Sleeve' project illustrated massing

## How were you first introduced to the ArcPrep program?

At Cass Tech we choose our own curriculums. I ended up choosing architecture because I was really interested in doing it. The first semester that I was in the curriculum, I had a drafting class and the ArcPrep would be taking us within the second semester.

## Do you have any first impressions of the program?

It was kind of unexpected. It just kind of came out of nowhere because I didn't really know about it at first until I met [our high-school drafting teacher] Miss Harding. At first I thought 'let's give it a shot, I don't know how it's gonna go'. But I'm really glad that I ended up doing it.

## Do you have any standout memories from the program?

Probably near the end of the year when we had the final presentation in the gallery of all the work that we did. We had our portfolios and presentations set up. It was really beautiful to see.

## What were some of the things you enjoyed most?

Probably over software, honestly, because after most of the software was mostly like Rhino and design or photoshop, but I am gonna be using these ROSSETTI to build the model.

*"[Seeing other people's work] gives a little bit of motivation and creativity into your mind to create something new."*

## What were some of your takeaways for what were the big things that you learned? About what architecture is, what an architect does or the role of an architect?

I've learned that they're really disciplined. The first few weeks of ArcPrep, [former ArcPrep Director] Yojairo [Lomeli] was the main mentor. He had us do an exercise with the lines and how straight they have to be free-handing. No rulers at all. And doing that itself it taught us all ArcPrep students how disciplined architects are in their work and how strict they have to be.

## So at what point did you decide that you wanted to pursue Architecture as a major?

When I was in Middle School, I learned about Blender, the

rendering program, and I kind of started doing 3D models in there. But I think during middle-school is when I started getting interested in buildings and the design-aspects. I thought when I'd give it a shot since architecture was a curriculum at Cass Tech. I chose it and then after going through the ArcPrep program, I decided to do architecture.

## You were one of the students that were selected for the ROSSETTI summer internship. Can you describe a little bit what that was like for you?

It was an experience you definitely remember. It was a great experience when we got there. We were shadowing some designers and architects and we were given a few meetings to learn about InDesign and Rhino. More than what we had to learn in ArcPrep to help ROSSETTI build an architecture model for one of their projects, the MSU building. It was a student health and wellness center. That's what we ended up building.

## Who or what creatively inspires you these days?

Probably other people's work - seeing how they created something from their mind and kind of understanding it from their perspective. It gives a little bit of motivation and creativity into your mind to create something new.

## What are your plans for the future at the moment? Are you planning to apply to our architecture school?

Yeah, I've actually applied to Taubman college and I'm waiting on the response back. I did early action. I've applied to a few colleges and right now I'm just working on a few scholarships to apply to.

## If you could offer one piece of advice to current ArcPrep students, what would it be?

Listen very closely. That's a fact because during our time, it was a big jump, but I feel like if you listened a bit more closely and paid attention to what the aids and mentors are saying, it's definitely a great experience.



# NYVEY PERRYMAN

ArcPrep Class of 2016

**Project Designer at Baskervill**

**B.Arch, University of Detroit Mercy, Class of 2021**

**M.Arch, University of Detroit Mercy, Class of 2022**



M.Arch Thesis, Anchoring Abandonment



M.Arch Thesis, Anchoring Abandonment

## What were some of your first impressions of the program?

I thought it was pretty interesting at first coming into the program. I remember vividly we started off with a team building exercise and then we were doing some still-lives and drawings and things like that, but I really liked that it gave me a college-level experience of how it would be in architecture. Honestly, it gave me some perspective on whether or not I was gonna move forward with architecture because I was like, 'okay if I can handle this then I think the transition to college should be pretty good'.

## What was your experience working at 313 creative?

We were doing community engagement projects where we will organize the information that we will get back from other firms and we will actually do the engagement talking to the people – gathering the information and then making it digestible for the firms doing the work. They also did some Equitable Development Initiative (EDI) work which was great experience for me because I didn't know any of the development process and this program highlights development by minorities in Detroit.

*"You can still be innovative and problem-solve at the same time that you make experiences for people."*

## Do you have any stand-out memories of the program?

This is where I had my first Photoshop journey. The program introduced me to the software because we were doing hand-drafting at Cass, but when we got to the ArcPrep, we were doing computer work. So I remember learning Photoshop and on my final critique, they were like 'this is your first time doing Photoshop?' and I was in the back like 'Yes! I did it!' . Like they couldn't believe it was my first time!

## Right, I remember your final project, and the specific rendering that you worked on, it was really impressive! Do you think that were there things that you learned in the ArcPrep that could also be applied to other career pathways?

The whole critique thing actually really, really helped because you have to know how to do the work and then also receive feedback. So feedback on a peer- to-peer level, then also receiving personal feedback from the teacher. It kind of gets you in that mindset, even if I didn't go into architecture and I did business or something, if I'm doing some type of presentation, I should expect to hear some type of feedback, but not necessarily take it personally.

## Who do you see as your mentors in architecture?

Well, definitely [former ArcPrep fellow] Missy [Ablin]. So shout-out to ArcPrep because after the whole program and everything. I think I was in the second year of college, I decided that I wanted to get a little bit more active and architecture-world, so I went to an event that the Arcprep was hosting there at the Midtown location. I saw Missy and I just so happened to be looking for an internship that year. She was like, 'hey, send me your portfolio', I sent her my portfolio and I ended up working for 313 Creative for two years after that. So that was pretty cool.

## So you're working on licensure, correct?

Yep, maybe I think I'm roughly a thousand hours in so I got two-thirds left to go. I'm planning to take my first test sometime sometime next year.

## What excites you the most about architecture?

Bringing an idea to life that also affects the lives of people which is really what I'm trying to do here. So I like the fact that you can still be creative. You can still be innovative and problem-solve at the same time that you make experiences for people.

## What are your plans for the future? What would you personally like to accomplish?

I really think that in the next 10 years Detroit is gonna be totally, totally different. It's on a steep come-up. So I feel like once I get my license and everything, if I could come back and do something for the community that would make me feel fulfilled because then I feel like I put my little mark on the city just a little bit.

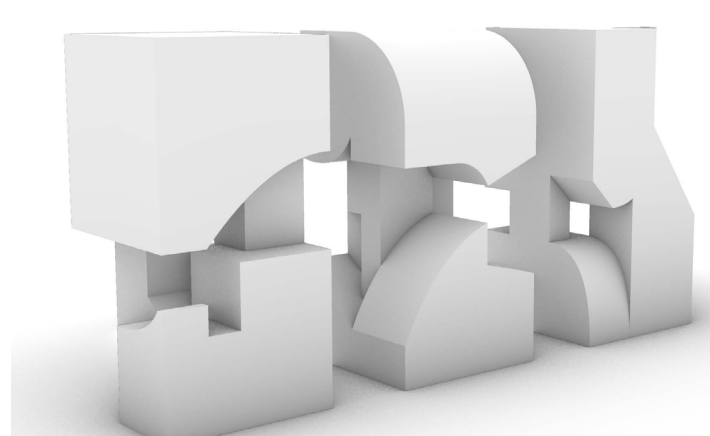
## My last question is if you could offer any piece of advice to a current ArcPrep student, what would it be?

I would just say hang in there. That's the best advice even though it sounds pretty wack, like, hang in there whatever, but truly, if you just stay on something, keep up with it. I would just say keep trying. And that's all I can say.

# JOHAN MEDEL

ArcPrep Class of 2020

Undergraduate Student at University of Michigan  
B.Arch, University of Michigan, Class of 2026



Triptch 3D Model Compositions

## Was attending the program what you expected it to be?

I would say it was not what I expected it to be. The projects were very different in terms of their angle. I still remember one of the projects which most impacted me was when we were making our various food stands and then mine was basically made off of the fact that my mom has her own business making tamales. It was one of the more memorable parts of the program because at the end I was able to show my mom and she got real excited – seeing architecture isn't really just about building. It gave me a broader understanding what architecture can be and that was something I did not expect from the program.

going to be able to do that'. But as the year goes by, you're learning more and seeing that progression. It's nice to be someone who's on that learning curve of architecture and seeing how you grow in this space.

## What are your plans for the future?

I have an internship this summer [with Walbridge] lined up. So I'm very excited for that. I'm obviously very excited to finish these four years and then after that, my plan is to gain some experience at a firm and hopefully come back to school then work on my licensure.

*"It's nice to be someone who's on that learning curve of architecture and seeing how you grow in this space."*

## What were some of the things you enjoyed most about that program?

One of the things I enjoyed most was the open dialogue that we had with the instructor as well as other students. It was, I guess, soothing to be able to hear the other ideas that those students had for their projects and how you can build off on those as well as being able to exchange ideas and see where your project can go.

ArcPrep has certainly prepared me for architecture school just with being able to have dialogue – to be able to give opinions as well as to take opinions from other students. Not just the teachers, but the students because they're just as insightful as the instructor. So yeah, I love that – learning from each other.

## So you took the summer internship at ROSSETTI and we worked together during that time. I'm also thinking now that your semester was entirely remote. So what was that transition like from the program to being full-time in-person in an architecture office?

It was very intriguing to see how some of the lessons learned in ArcPrep can translate over into the career of architecture. I realized how we also do need that face-to-face obviously compared to ArcPrep. I guess virtual for us was – not to make it sound bad – it was kind of like this depressing thing because it was basically you on a screen for eight hours a day. So it was this very refreshing thing to see people face-to-face, meeting with clients and collaborating on various projects.

## What excites you the most about architecture?

What excites me the most is seeing the third and fourth-years and what they're doing and thinking 'I'm never

## Do you see yourself staying involved with future generations of ArcPrep students?

Yes, most definitely. I feel like throughout my life, I've always been going through without a guide to help me through school. I feel like the ArcPrep instructors were those guides for these students and seeing how this program has helped me so much, I would be very happy to be that guide for future ArcPrep students.

## Who or what inspires you these days?

I always think about my parents and the sacrifices they made whenever I'm at college. Seeing what they left behind [in Veracruz], the family that they left behind, the sacrifices they made to come over here to give me a better chance at life reminds me that 'hey you're doing this not for yourself, but also for them'. That's the biggest inspiration to me.

## If you could offer one piece of advice to current ArcPrep students, what would it be?

Keep the relationships you have, not just the ArcPrep students, but most importantly the instructors of the program. There are so many opportunities that they can offer, as well as insights to the very ideas that you have when you're still in school. If you keep those bonds that you make at the ArcPrep, it will help you somewhere down the line. You never know what might come out of it. So it's always very important to keep those relationships.



## If you could give one piece of advice to a current ArcPrep student, what would it be?

### **JOSHUA POWELL**

*Arcprep Class of 2015*

I would say really begin to do some research on the kind of buildings and kind of architecture that you're interested in right now. Just follow your dreams and if there's something that you want to do, look into it. Don't think of it as a pipe-dream. If you intend to go to college or even not, there are other ways that you can involve yourself in these disciplines that can connect back to your dreams depending on what you want to do. I'd say just pursue it now and really look into it.

### **SUDIP DEB**

*Arcprep Class of 2022*

Listen very closely. That's a fact because during our time, it was a big jump, but I feel like if you listened a bit more closely and paid attention to what the aids and mentors are saying, it's definitely a great experience.

### **DENAJA KING**

*Arcprep Class of 2022*

My advice would definitely be to stick with your dreams even if you think it may not turn out the way you want, stick with it because for me personally, I wanted to be an engineer. I went through school and I was do I really feel like I could be an engineer, especially being a minority and then being a woman in the industry that has barely any of us, so just to stick with your dreams, don't let adversity pull you away from what you want to do.

### **NYVEY PERRYMAN**

*Arcprep Class of 2016*

I would just say hang in there. That's the best advice even though it sounds pretty wack, like, hang in there whatever, but truly, if you just stay on something, keep up with it. I would just say keep trying. And that's all I can say.

### **KAMRYON JOHNSON**

*Arcprep Class of 2021*

Take full advantage of it and network! I'm learning as you get to college, it's not what you know, it's more who you know. You never know who you could be talking to, so always maintain professionalism as well and just put yourself out there. You never know who's looking out for you.

### **JOHAN MEDEL**

*Arcprep Class of 2020*

Keep the relationships you have, not just the ArcPrep students, but most importantly the instructors of the program. There's so many opportunities that they can offer as well as insights to the very ideas that you have when you're still in school. If you keep those bonds that you make at the ArcPrep, it will help you somewhere down the line. You never know what might come out of it. So it's always very important to keep those relationships.

### **FERDINEM BARTOLON**

*Arcprep Class of 2015*

That's a good one. So if you do decide to do architecture school, it's gonna get hard. Architecture school is hard and stressful, but in the end, I feel like it's worth it if you're really motivated. Architecture is not for everyone. I've seen a lot of people in college that it wasn't for them, and they would drop out, but if they decide to keep pushing forward, I feel like it's rewarding in the end.

### **ABID CHOWDHURY**

*Arcprep Class of 2016*

I would say have mentors. Make connections. And also later on in life learn to mentor as well.